

Message Text

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14

ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1895

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR, BM

SUBJ: SEVERE SENTENCES GIVEN NARCOTICS OFFENDERS

1. RECENT RANGOON COURT PROCEEDINGS AGAINST NARCOTICS ABUSERS AND PEDDLERS, AS ANNOUNCED IN JULY 8 NEWSPAPERS, ILLUSTRATE THE SEVERE TREATMENT NOW ACCORDED DRUG OFFENDERS IN BURMA. SIX OFFENDERS, INCLUDING POPULAR MOVIE DIRECTOR, WERE SENTENCED TO TEN YEARS FOR POSSESSION OF DRUGS AND ALSO GIVEN CONCURRENT FIFTEEN YEAR SENTENCES FOR PEDDLING. ANOTHER OFFENDER WAS SENTENCED TO TEN YEARS FOR POSSESSION OF MARIJUANA, WHICH, UNDER 1974 DRUG LAW, IS REGARDED IN SAME LIGHT AS OPIUM AND DERIVATIVES. AN EIGHTH OFFENDER WAS ALSO GIVEN A TEN YEAR SENTENCE FOR ESCAPING FROM THE PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL WHILE RECEIVING TREATMENT FOR HIS ADDICTION. THIS OFFENDER HAS HAD HISTORY OF ABUSE AND PEDDLING.

2. COMMENT: THESE CASES ARE PART OF THE CURRENT NATION-WIDE CAMPAIGN BY POLICE AND COURTS TO CRACK DOWN HARD ON NARCOTICS OFFENDERS, INCLUDING HARSH PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS WITH THE GOAL OF FRIGHTENING OFFENDERS BY WELL-PUBLICIZED EXAMPLES.

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